

WATER/WASTEWATER FACILITIES COMMISSION  
COMMISSION MINUTES  
March 11, 2015

A meeting of the City of Fitchburg Water / Wastewater Commission was held on March 11, 2015 at the JA Provincial Building, 1200 Rindge Rd, Fitchburg, MA.

The meeting commenced at 4:45 P.M.

Members present:     Lenny Laakso, Commissioner DPW  
                               Rick Healey  
                               Michael McLaughlin  
                               Ron Lubianez

Members Absent:     George Siener  
                               Carol Brown

Others present:       Jeff Murawski, Deputy Commissioner Wastewater  
                               Mary Jane Franklin

**ITEM # 1: Approval of last meetings minutes:**

The minutes for the February 11, 2015 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

**ITEM # 2: Public Forum:**

No public forum comments were received.

**ITEM # 3: Update on Deputy Commissioner of Water:**

Mr. Laakso informed the Commission that after advertising for Deputy Commissioner of Water in a number of publications, five candidates were interviewed. The interview committee consisted of Bernie Stephens (Director of Human Resources), Mr. Healey and Mr. Laakso. The position was offered to John Deline, he accepted and will begin March 30, 2015.

There was a brief discussion regarding the hiring process per the City Code, and Mr. Laakso gave a synopsis of Mr. Deline's work history.

Mr. Murawski inquired about a recent water main break at the Water Street Bridge. Mr. Laakso explained this is the third time in ten years this main has had a break. There is a cat walk under the bridge that theoretically would provide access for repairs, however it is in disrepair and unsafe. The leak has been isolated and no one is without water. It will be repaired sometime in the future.

**ITEM # 4: Update on sewer infrastructure damage in the Nashua River (near First Street and Railroad Street):**

Mr. Murawski gave the Commission a detailed version of the sequence of events which unfolded on the river manhole.

The original damage to this manhole structure, which is in the bed of the North Nashua River, is believed to have occurred on January 18, 2015. Due to a wet weather event that preceded the manhole damage, we weren't alerted to a problem as it wasn't discovered until high flows at the plant remained high for an unusual duration after the wet weather event.

On February 4, 2015, the cause of the inflow was positively identified (the river manhole).

The on call contractor was at the site on February 5, 2015 for a preliminary assessment.

A scope of work was provided to the contractor on February 10, 2015 and after some negotiations a proposal was received back from the contractor on February 18, 2015.

An access ramp needs to be constructed down to the manhole, however, the work zone is inaccessible by the existing easement due to a 20-inch gas main which cuts across the slope. A right of entry was requested from the adjacent property owner and after agreeing to compensate the owner for the value equivalent of 1 year's worth of water/sewer from the Wastewater budget, the right of entry was received on February 19, 2015.

On February 20, 2015 the notice to proceed was issued to the contractor.

After a brief delay due to a complication with the contractor's insurance, the contractor mobilized to the site on February 24, 2015. An access way was created followed by an assessment of the manhole condition. The existing manhole was constructed of brick masonry with concrete fill over the exterior of the masonry. The manhole sheered at a horizontal mortar plane in the brick, leaving a ring of mortar higher than the brick. A 1-inch thick steel plate was fabricated with exact dimensions to perfectly cover the manhole and a roofing compound was used to provide a better seal. As a result of this, the flows at the plant drastically reduced from approximately 13-14 million gallons per day to approximately 6-8 million per day. Mr. Murawski had been providing daily status reports to DEP/EPA and because of the effectiveness of the repair (the flows are where they are expected to be seasonally) they have opted to reduce this frequency to weekly reporting. CCTV weekly inspections are also being done on the 8" line going down the slope and on the damaged manhole and after two rounds, it's been stable.

If the situation remains stable, the permanent repair will be done when weather conditions allow. If the conditions status were to deteriorate, and emergency response were required, by the contract, the contractor is required to be on site and commencing work within four hours.

## **ITEM # 5: Discuss Development of the “scoping” & scheduling for:**

### **Hazel Street Area (associated w. /inability to Close Regulator #036, on Laurel Street):**

An engineering proposal has been solicited from Wright Pierce, the collections systems on call engineers and Mr. Murawski anticipates a draft proposal this week. Part of Wright Pierce’s proposal will be an engineering services contract dedicated for combination manholes.

Mr. Murawski reminded the Commission that the Hazel Street area is a tributary area which is prohibiting the closure of Regulator #036 on Laurel Street. There may be another small area still connected to storm water in this general vicinity. He explained there is still no clear answer on why this area wasn’t incorporated into the design.

### **Remaining two river sewer manholes (up and down stream of the current manhole repair project):**

Mr. Murawski reminded the Commission that this was the second riverbed manhole to become damaged in two years and there are three remaining riverbed manholes.

One of the three manholes is in an abandoned spur (near Sawyer Passway). Some years back, the sewer flow was rerouted to a pump station after damage from a gravity sewer, which crossed the river, was discovered.

There are also two “live” manholes:

1. An 18-inch sewer main that runs parallel to and on the westerly side of Sawyer Passway, crosses the river and comes to what was a junction manhole (the dead spur also came into this manhole). This is now an angle manhole (the flow changes ninety degrees within it).
2. Another manhole (just west of the damaged manhole) is adjacent to the trunk line sewer. This manhole has an 18-inch line which runs up the riverbed and into the trunk line (and connecting to the trunk sewer by a blind tie-in from a throttle pipe). This manhole is offset from the trunk line by approximately 10-ft.

DEP/EPA has requested a plan to address the remaining river manholes by May 2015, and for the work for all three manholes be completed by October 2015.

### **Combination Manholes Separation:**

Requirements of both the NPDES permit and the Consent Decree (the Consent Decree incorporates by reference the NPDES Permit) concern provisions of combination manholes. If a combination manhole shows evidence of transference of flow, from one side to the other, it needs to be separated within two years.

Blue Diamond (the on call contractor) addressed the first 6 manholes identified as needing to be separated which used up nearly the entire budget of what was earmarked for collection systems construction. Mr. Murawski would like to explore other methodologies that could be more cost effective such as partnering with UNITIL and Chapter 90 paving efforts and separating the manholes that meet the criteria as a priority first (transference from sanitary sewer to drain).

## **ITEM # 6: SSU Project**

### **Update on Schedule (Project, and the FEMA LOMR):**

Mr. Murawski he should be receiving a draft report associated with the FEMA LOMR study from Wright Pierce. If the 100 year flood is not addressed correctly DEP won't authorize the use of SRF funding. Mr. Murawski explained that most likely any institutions would have the same issues with this situation. The purpose behind the FEMA LOMR is to petition FEMA to review more updated data. There has been 40 additional years of river data and which may indicate the current information is overly conservative and high. The submission of the FEMA report and application is scheduled to be sent to FEMA on May 8, 2015. The final version of the FEMA LOMR, after subsequent review discussions, will be sent by September 4, 2015. Approval from both Fitchburg and Leominster City Councils will be sought in the beginning of October 2015. Finalization of the design and bidding documents for the SSU Project is scheduled for September 2015 and the SRF application for the SSU project will be submitted in August 2015.

### **Update on OPM Selection Status:**

There has been a delay in the procuring of the bidding and construction phase engineering services associated with SSU. Initially an exemption was acquired to the Chapter 149 provisions. As the design got underway, significantly more electrical and sub trade work was discovered than originally thought. This would typically be under Chapter 149 bid projects. When this determination was made the design was approximately 75% completed. In an effort to avoid ending the entire project (and having to start over), the State was contacted and they advised, from this point on, treating this as a Chapter 149 project. Therefore, an OPM is now needed (it is a requirement of Chapter 149 when a certain dollar threshold is met) and Wright Pierce's contract specifically precludes Chapter 149 work. Additionally, an RFP for engineering services associated with the construction phase may need to be done.

General contracts and subcontractors will need to be prequalified and go through the Purchasing Department.

## **ITEM # 7: Other Business:**

Mr. Murawski reported two safety trainings sessions have been completed for electrical safety. A meeting will be held with the trainer to develop lock out tag out procedures. The first of two confined space entry trainings will be held on March 20, 2015.

Drains that had been previously installed are being cleaned along with CCTV recording work is being done on the CSS4D project.

Mr. Laakso reported he received a phone call from Ken Jones (former City employee, now retired) on behalf of Mark Gionet of 689 Franklin Road. Per Mr. Jones, Mr. Gionet is unable to pay the amount of his bill in the allotted time frame. There was a brief discussion about whether an extension would be given.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2015 at 4:30 P.M. at the JA Provincial Building, 1200 Rindge Rd., Fitchburg, MA.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Minutes Prepared by \_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Jane Franklin